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FIG. 2 shows a second embodiment of the invention; and

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FIG. 3 shows a flexible support provided with a sublimable decoration.--

Page 8, after "DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT", please insert the following:

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--Referring now in detail to the drawings and, in particular, FIG. 1 shows a process for painting and decorating artefacts 1, from metal materials, ceramic materials, wood, plastics, utilising the technique of the transfer of monochrome or polychrome patterns or figures reproduced on a transfer support 2, by means of the combined action of pressure and temperature.

The artefact is wrapped up or tightly covered with a sublimable colour transfer support 2, having the form of a sheet. The sheet is made of a supporting base 4 from gas-tight thermoformable plastic material, the pattern 5 or decoration to be transferred to artefact 1 being carried on support base 4.

A vacuum is created between artefact 1 and support 2, through a work bench 3 onto which said artefact 1 is placed. This causes transfer support 2 to uniformly adhere to the surface of the artefact 1 to be decorated.

Artefact 1 is submitted to a heating action at temperatures of 200-230°C, for a time of from about 30 seconds to 30 minutes, to perform the transfer and the polymerisation of the final colours from the transfer support 2 to the artefact 1.

Exhausted supporting base 4 is removed, after cooling, from the decorated surface of artefact 1.

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According to a second aspect of the invention, a process for painting and decorating artefacts 1, from metal materials, ceramic materials, wood, plastics, utilising the technique of the transfer of monochrome or polychrome patterns or figures reproduced on a transfer support 2, by means of the combined action of pressure and temperature.

Artefact 1 is wrapped up or tightly covered with a sublimable colour transfer support 6, having the form of a bag, or a stocking, or an envelope, comprising a supporting base 4 from gas-tight thermoformable plastic material, the pattern 5 or decoration to be transferred to the artefact 1 to be decorated being carried on said supporting base 4.

A vacuum is created between artefact 1 and support 6, through an open end 9 of support 6, so as to cause the transfer support 6 to uniformly adhere to the surface of the artefact 1 to be decorated.

Artefact 1 is submitted to a heating action at temperatures of 200-230°C, for a time of from about 30 seconds to 30 minutes, to perform the transfer and the polymerisation of the final colours from the transfer support 6 to the artefact 1.

Exhausted supporting base 4 is removed, after cooling from the decorated surface of artefact 1. Supporting base 4 comprises thermoformable, gas-tight plastic material is constituted by polyvinyl alcohol.

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contd
Transfer support 2, 6 comprised of polyvinyl alcohol and is gas-tight and thermoformable, has excellent resistance to traction and forms the vacuum directly between the artefact and the support. This obtains a perfect and uniform adhesion of support 2, 6 to artefact 1, and eliminates possible working rejects and greatly simplifies both the process and the installation, as well as the equipment necessary to realise it.

Exhausted supporting base 4, i.e. having no longer the pattern or decoration once this has been transferred on to the artefact 1 surface, carries on the function of a protecting film of the decorated surface of the artefact 1 and the same artefact 1, protecting it from blows, scratches and the like during the steps of storage and/or transportation, during the operations of installation, such as sawing in case of profiles for doors and windows, and the like. Therefore, special protective films or paints are not needed. Providing a remarkable saving in both the

protective material and the time employed to perform the application of said protecting material.

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According to another embodiment, artefact 1 is wrapped up or covered with sublimable colour transfer support 2, 6 which adheres by a vacuum to the surface. It is submitted to a first intermediate heating action at a temperature at which the thermoforming occurs, i.e. the permanent adhesion of the transfer support 2, 6 to artefact 1 support, even at a temperature lower to that at which the transfer and the polymerisation, and therefore the consolidation of the sublimable colours, occur.--

[Page 11, please amend paragraphs 1-3 as follows:

--A work bench 3 whereon an artefact 1 to be decorated, possibly suitably pre-treated (cleaned, degreased and already treated with one or more preliminary layers of paint or submitted to colourless or coloured anodic oxidation) rests, and on which bench 3 said artefact is prepared by tight-closing it in the transfer support 2, 6.

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A device 8 to create a vacuum between said transfer support 2, 6 and the artefact 1 to be decorated, so that said support 2, 6 adheres and exercises a pressure on said wrapped up artefact 1.

Heating means 7 located above said work bench 3, associated to ventilation and air circulation, positioned in a special hood.--
